

**Resolution of the Assembly of the Orthodox Diocese of Sitka, Anchorage and Alaska  
Concerning the Sanctity of the Earth and the Responsibility all Alaskan Native People  
serve as its Guardians and Protectors**

Whereas, according to the traditions and teachings of Alaska Native peoples, the Earth and the whole creation have always been perceived and experienced as filled with the sacred presence of Life, and

Whereas, historically Alaska Native peoples have approached all living and life-sustaining elements with reverence and respect, and

Whereas, in the Sacred Scriptures our Orthodox Christian Tradition, the creation of the world began with the Spirit of God moving on the face of the Deep, and

Whereas, God so loved the KOSMOS, meaning the whole creation, that He sent His Son into the world to bless, renew and sanctify it, and

Whereas, at the beginning of His earthly ministry, Our Lord Jesus Christ came first to the waters of the Jordan and

Whereas, at the time of His baptism, the Holy Trinity was revealed as the Voice of the Father spoke from heaven and the Holy Spirit descended upon the waters in the form of a Dove to renew the creation, and

Whereas, in commemoration of the Baptism of Our Lord each year the Church celebrates the Great Blessing of Water at lakes, streams and on the coasts of the seas and oceans, and

Whereas, in the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church, the Great Blessing of Waters is a normal and regular feature of every baptism and

Whereas, the parishes of the Orthodox Diocese, founded at Kodiak in 1794 have been conducting this rite of blessing and sanctification for more than two hundred years in Alaska, and

Whereas, it is therefore the belief and sacred tradition of Alaskan Orthodox people that the lakes, rivers, streams and ocean are sacred to us, and

Whereas, that which is sacred must be treated with utmost respect, care and reverence and guarded from any danger of defilement, desecration or pollution,

Be it resolved that the Orthodox Church in Alaska calls upon all appropriate state and federal agencies to reject any so-called commercial or economic “development” that in any way threatens the viability, purity and sanctity of the natural world, especially the rivers and lakes which we hold sacred by both God’s original blessing and the continued invocation of the Holy Spirit to bless and sanctify the rivers and lakes along which our communities have been established for thousands of years, and

Be it further Resolved that the Orthodox Church in Alaska welcomes and invokes God's Blessing upon all those who would bring economic development to our communities provided they can prove by successful and continuing operation elsewhere on earth, (and not hypothetically or theoretically), that they can conduct such activities without potential or significant harm to the natural environment or polluting the waters which we hold blessed and sacred.